



Fact Sheet

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Democrats: Still Leading the Fight Against Crime

As one of their first bills in the 105th Congress, Senate Democrats will introduce legislation which builds on the success of the *1994 Crime Act* and other crime-fighting initiatives enacted during President Clinton's first term. As a result of the Democrats in the 104th Congress, the Nation's crime rate is lower than any time since 1985. The F.B.I.'s *Annual Crime Survey* demonstrates that Democratic measures such as *the Brady Law*, *the Cops-on-the-Beat Program*, and *the Violence Against Women Act* have contributed to safer streets and neighborhoods. While Republicans consistently opposed efforts to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and even attempted to eliminate the popular and effective *Cops-on-the-Beat Program*, Democrats remained committed to strict anti-crime laws, which were supported by the Nation's law enforcement community.

Democratic successes. Thanks to the addition of over 50,000 newly-funded police officers, the *Violence Against Women Act*, and the *Brady Law*, which has prevented more than 60,000 felons, fugitives and stalkers from purchasing handguns, the FBI reported the following:

- the number of murders fell 7.4 percent from 1994 to 1995; and,
- the number of robberies in 1995 decreased 6.2 percent from the preceding year, while the number of robberies committed with a firearm fell even further—down 7.6 percent.

Youth violence, crime and drugs. While Democratic initiatives continue to drive down crime rates across the country, juvenile crime and drug abuse still stalk our Nation's cities, suburbs and rural communities. Young people in the United States increasingly are confronted with an unprecedented plague of temptations and risks. Drug dealers exploit children, spread violence, and infest America's neighborhoods with crime and fear.

- Since the beginning of the decade, the number of juveniles charged with narcotics-related crimes has more than doubled.
- The percentage of eighth graders who reported using marijuana in the past year rose from 15.8 percent to 18.3 percent, and among twelfth graders the percentage rose from 34.7 percent to 35.8 percent.

Democratic Policy Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C., 20510-7050

Tom Daschle, Chairman
Harry Reid, Co-Chairman



Drug-dealing gangs are responsible for much of the problem.

- A 1996 Justice Department survey estimated that 652,000 gang members are part of 25,000 gangs throughout the country.
- Federal authorities also reported that in 48 percent of the communities surveyed gang problems are getting worse.

The Democratic Response to Youth Violence, Crime, and Drug Abuse

The Nation's problems with youth violence, gangs, and drug abuse continue. Senate Democrats are offering a comprehensive bill which cracks down on violent young offenders and provides resources to implement proven crime and drug prevention programs.

Specifically, the Democrats *Youth Violence, Crime and Drug Abuse Bill* will:

- ✓ continue the successes of the *1994 Crime Act* by:
 - continuing the Community Oriented Policing (COPS) program for two additional years to put 25,000 more police officers on the street; and,
 - extending the *Violence Against Women Act* through 2002, and the Violent Crime Reduction Trust Fund for two years.
- ✓ reform the juvenile justice system by:
 - increasing the time violent juvenile offenders are kept in prison; and,
 - providing mandatory restitution to the *victims* of juvenile crime.
- ✓ reduce gang violence, by:
 - increasing the penalties for crimes in which the offender wears protective body armor or uses "laser sighting" devices; and,
 - allowing law enforcement officials quicker access to "clone" numeric pagers.
- ✓ prevent and treat youth drug addiction, by:
 - creating incentives for private industry to invest in research and development in medicines that effectively treat heroin and cocaine addiction;
 - extending the effective Safe and Drug Free Schools Program through 2002.